

LAND BOARD AGENDA ITEM

September 15, 2008

REQUEST FOR PRELIMINARY APPROVAL OF THE Department of Commerce Transfer of the Malta Dinosaur Museum to the City of Malta

REQUEST: The Department of Commerce requests preliminary approval for transfer of the Great Plains Dinosaur Museum to the City of Malta.

LOCATION: The street address is 405 1st East Street. Legal description: Lot 7 in Block 2 of the Original Townsite of Malta, Phillips County, Montana, according to the official recorded plat thereof. EXCLUDING therefrom the East 50 feet of Lot 7 in Block 2 of the Original Townsite of Malta, Phillips County, Montana, according to the official recorded plat thereof. Reference Document: Contract for Deed recorded in Book 29 of M.R.E. pages 192-193.

BACKGROUND: In 2005, the Legislature (HB 423) appropriated \$500,000 to the Department to acquire and construct a dinosaur park in Malta. The facility was subsequently built, and the Department is currently leasing that facility to the private, non-profit Judith River Foundation for operation and maintenance.

AUTHORITY: §77-2-351, MCA, authorizes the Board of Land Commissioners to dispose of, sell, or exchange certain state lands for less than market value, if the receiving entity makes a binding commitment to use the property to provide a community service or a benefit that fulfills a public purpose.

PROPOSAL: The Department would like to initiate the process to turn the facility over to a local governmental entity, the City of Malta. Once the Department receives preliminary approval for the transfer, the Department will conduct the necessary MEPA review and contract for an updated appraisal of the property.

A 351 transfer requires consultation with the appropriate legislative committee. The Department is scheduled to meet with the Legislative Council at its September 16, 2008 meeting.

Upon preliminary approval, a public notice of the proposal will be published in the Phillips County News and the public will be given an opportunity for comment.

The Department will place a reversionary clause on the deed that requires the property to be used for a public purpose or it will revert to the state.

BENEFIT TO THE STATE: The Department believes that ownership of the Great Plains Dinosaur Museum should be transferred to the City of Malta. The Department has no funds or staff time available to assure maintenance of the facility, and the distance to the facility from Helena, 292 miles, makes oversight difficult. Along with the Board of Directors of the Judith River Foundation, the City of Malta has been a willing

and eager partner in the development the Great Plains Dinosaur Museum from the initial inception of the idea. The dinosaur museum is a major tourist attraction and a benefit to the local business community. It is in the interest of the state to see that the facility is properly maintained for the long term.

In addition, Foundation members have stated that they believe that local ownership of the museum could help them in their fund raising efforts with potential private donors and foundations. Ownership by the State of Montana implies to some potential donors that the Museum has greater financial resources than is actually the case. Notably, many state and federal grant programs are geared to local partnerships between private enterprise, non-profit organizations, and local government. It will benefit the state to encourage as much private investment in the facility as possible for proper long-term operation and maintenance of the museum.

AGENCY RECOMMENDATION: The Department believes this proposed land transfer would benefit the Department and the State of Montana. The Director of Commerce recommends that the Land Board grant preliminary approval of the transfer of this property to the City of Malta.



Milk River

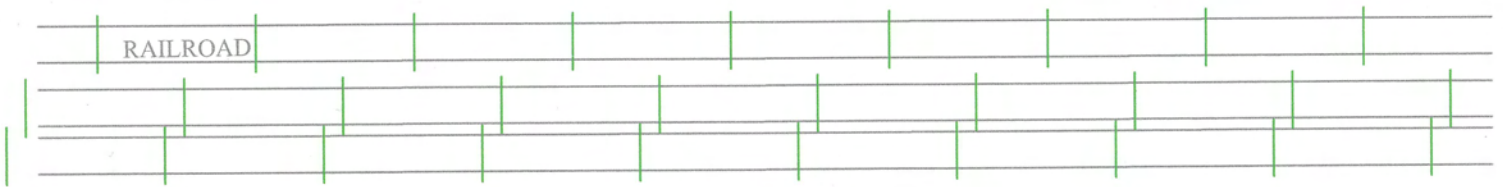
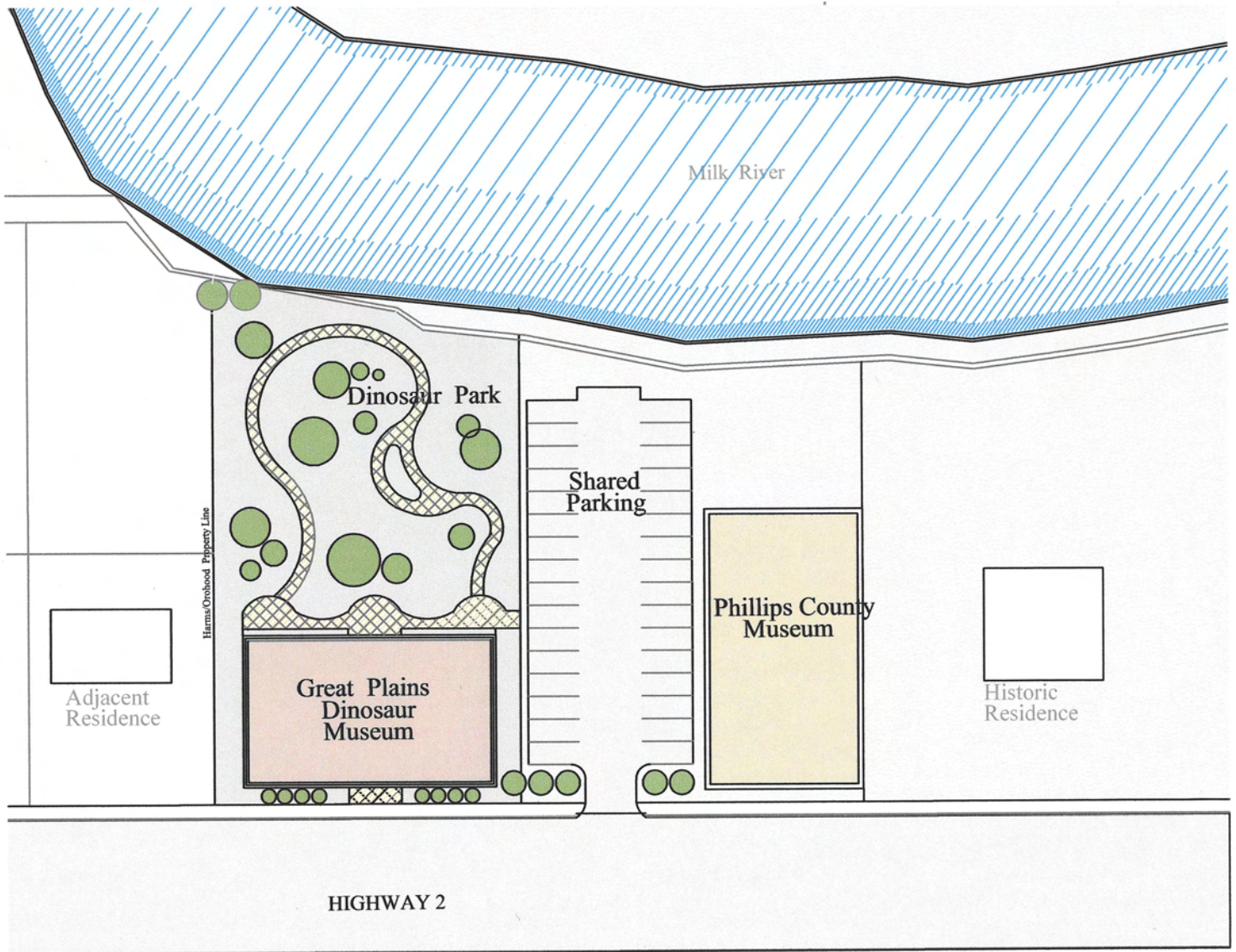
Proposed Parking

**Current Site of
Harms Floral**

**Current Phillips
County Historical
Society Building**

**US
Highway 2**

**BNSF/Amtrak
Rail Route**



CIVIC design
Great Falls, MT November 28, 2006

Great Plains Dinosaur Museum Site Plan

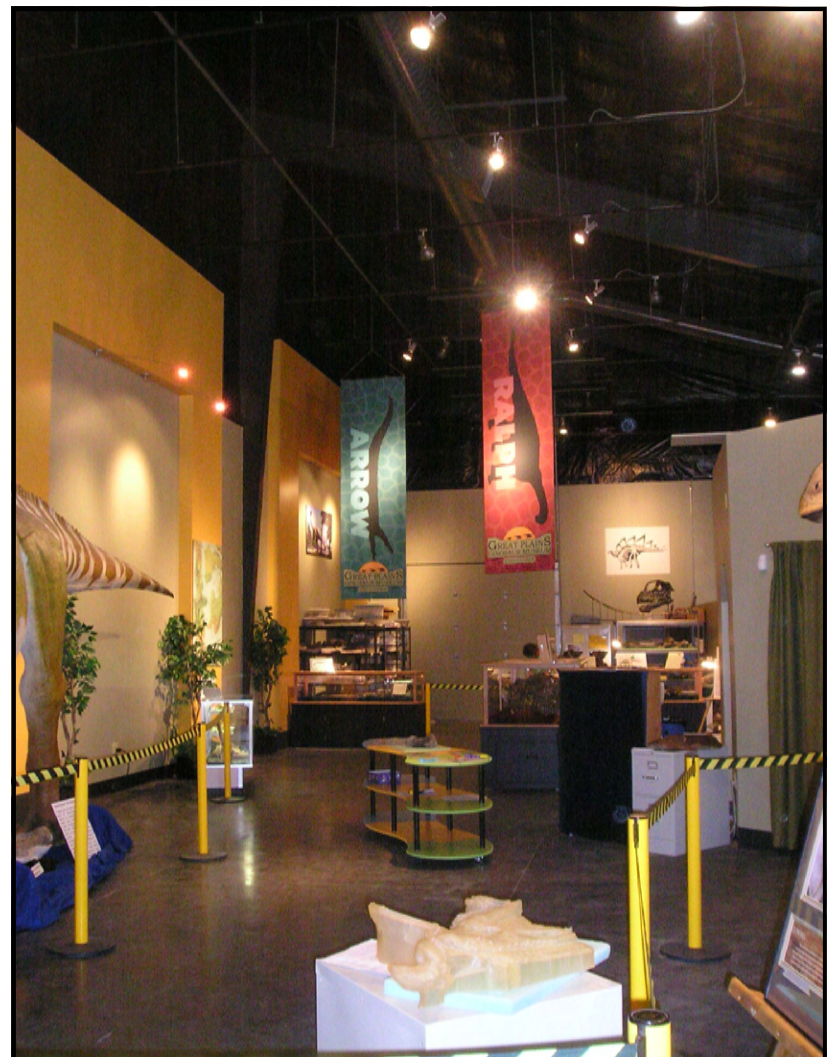


- Graphics as designed by Michael Berglund of Canopy Productions in Minneapolis, MN who has also assisted with the Houston exhibit.
- Banners were printed by Northcutt Banner Corporation also of Minneapolis.
- Exterior sign work - vinyl by Classy Threads, sign metal by Randy Shores/Randy's Machine Shop both of Malta.



Interior banners, total of four, showcasing facility specimens:

Roberta, Leonardo, Ralph and Arrow





Exterior entrance sign with US Highway frontage. Bottom portion of sign incomplete as shown. Final sign will feature similar graphic for Phillips County Museum in join sign effort. Sign is located on County Museum property and features both facilities within Museum Complex.



Main entrance to Great Plains Dinosaur Museum. Welcome.



Exterior landscape features natural dinosaur setting of dig site in northern Phillips County. Sage brush, junipers and yucca will growth with seasons.



Fiberglass bone bed panel has been installed to add to aesthetics of landscaping and provide exploratory bone bed/dig bit.



Bone bed features duck bill dinosaur and TRex bone skeletons similar to those found locally.



Depicting the area where Leonardo the Mummy Dinosaur was unearthed.

The diorama and faux wall was designed by local taxidermist Krissy Weakly of Milk River Mounts and artist Judy Michael.

Brochure rack featuring members of the Dinosaur Trail is also shown.

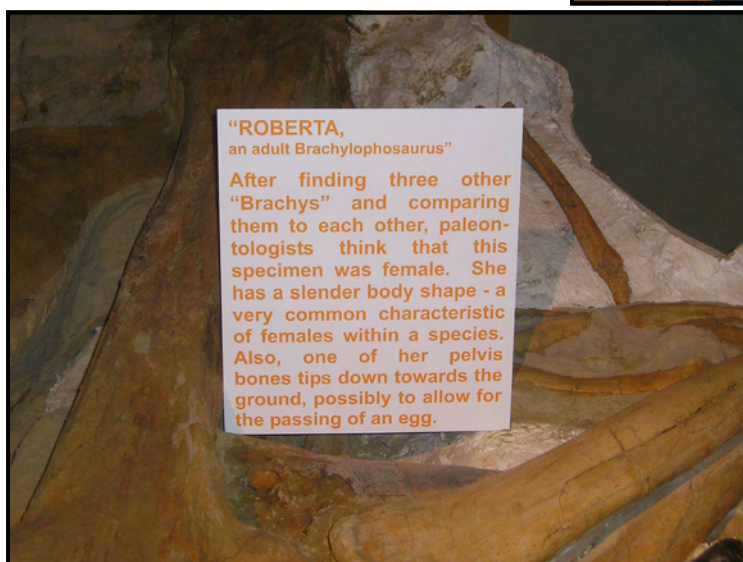
Interior display wall constructed, new maps, display boards - purchased with TIIP funds



Styracosaurus
This Cretaceous (a "horned" dinosaur) roamed prehistoric Montana, reaching lengths of 10 ft. It was one of the first horned dinosaurs to be discovered.

Its skull had an extensive bony frill with two large openings situated asymmetrically on either side of the frill. These openings would have reduced the weight of the frill.

Take head remains and from the edge of the bit of Styrofoam.



Adults: \$5
Children (12yr and younger): \$3
Children (5yr and younger): Free

Please
**No Photos,
Food or Drink**
In Exhibit Area



Interior display cases, children's interactive play table - funded with TIIP proceeds - thank you!

